

CLAIMS

1. A method of operating a telephony service on a telephony network, the method comprising:

establishing and/or requesting a telephonic connection and/or a call between a caller and a call recipient;

receiving a command signal initiated by the caller and/or the call recipient and/or the telephony network during any phase in the call process, the command signal comprising a data signal and/or tone; and

initiating a service to the caller and/or the call recipient, or initiating a transaction between the caller and the call recipient in response to receiving the command signal other than a standard call connect and/or disconnect command.
2. A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 1, wherein the command signal is initiated by the caller during a call set-up phase and/or a call connected phase.
3. A method of operating a telephony service according to either preceding claim, wherein the call recipient is any person, a company or any other entity with a directory and/or dialed telephone number.
4. A method of operating a telephony service according to any one of the preceding claims, which includes the step of prompting the caller and/or the call recipient to provide the command signal.
5. A method of operating a telephony service according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the service and/or transaction are/is

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automatically assembled in response to various criteria, including the caller and/or call recipient attributes and the called destination.

6. A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 5, wherein the caller and/or call recipient attributes include credit and availability, and the called destination include mobile or fixed, and national or international.
7. A method of operating a telephony service according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the command signal is issued by the caller prior to the call connect command.
8. A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 7, wherein the command signal can either be prefixed or postfixed to the call recipient's directory and/or dialed telephone number.
9. A method of operating a telephony service according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the data signal and/or tone relates to one of the "*", "0" or "#" keys of the telephone equipment of the caller.
10. A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 9, wherein each of the "*", "0" or "#" keys is associated with a different category of service or transaction.
11. A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 10, wherein the "*" key is associated with telephony and billing functions, the "0" key is associated with interactive network operator and information services access, and the "#" key is associated with commercial banking transactions between the caller and the call recipient.

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12. A method of operating a telephony service according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein a dedicated key is used to provide the command signal.
13. A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 12, wherein the dedicated key is selected from a group comprising the "@" symbol, a colour coded key, and a programmable key and/or menu and/or button.
14. A method of operating a telephony service according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the command signal is provided using a biometric trigger, based on either voice and/or fingerprint recognition.
15. A method of operating a telephony service according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the command signal comprises audio tones and/or data signals and/or signals transported over control channels and/or the network from a mobile telephone.
16. A method of operating a telephony service according to any one of the preceding claims, which includes the step of automatically associating a function indicated by the command signal with the caller as identified by the directory telephone number of the caller.
17. A method of operating a telephony service according to claim 16, wherein the directory telephone number of the caller is established by caller line identity (CLI).
18. A method of operating a telephony service according to any one of the preceding claims, which includes the step of automatically associating the function indicated by the command signal with the call recipient, as indicated by the directory telephone number entered when establishing the telephonic association.